

From: Smart Computing
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 12/7/01 10:13am
Subject: a consultant/user's point of view

Thank you for taking the time to listen to us.

As a consultant, I am out there every day and I see what works and what doesn't. I deal with small and mid-size businesses. These people are good spenders and need to work. They are not interested in theories.

Microsoft is everywhere. They have done good things, bringing relatively easy use of computers out there but they also have done terrible things.

Many of my clients still use Word Perfect and other non-Microsoft products. At the end of the day, Microsoft products, such as Office crashes more Windows computers than other products. The main problem my clients have is that Microsoft software is not stable and very expensive. Many are looking into Linux as a more robust solution and cheaper to acquire.

Microsoft has killed competition. What real choices do people have on the desktop? Windows, Mac/Apple (limited in everyday business use) and Linux with a steep learning curve. Now we are being locked in with having to pay for frequent upgrades which should be updates because Microsoft won't support Windows 95 and soon 98. BEOS was a great alternative but couldn't stand a chance in the market because people are so locked down by Microsoft.

This country is all about opportunities and competition which should give choices. However, when a company gets too big a market share (IBM, Bell), they will buy out the competition, embrace or steal their inventions and bundle them into their platform. This is where the line crosses over to unproductive competition.

The competition should rise to the opportunity but it is hard. This society believes in marketing more than it's consultants.

With all do respect, I do not understand what the DOJ

is doing, nor what competency it has in the IT world. Windows is a poor platform whose owners are more interested in shipping it out quickly, make a quick buck and fiddle with security issues later. I do not see a clear plan as to where and what the investigation is aiming at. I do not see who is in charge.

Is the real question, does Microsoft bundle software together to squash competition? Well yes! Where is Netscape now in regards to Internet Explorer? What about Windows Media Player? Word versus Word Perfect? Does Microsoft have the right to do so? Well, heck yes. It's their product. But who protects the end users who makes money to pay taxes and make the whole system go round? We hope it is you.

I feel this is the fine line where Microsoft has to be liable. They have been accused and proved of unfair competitive practices more than once in the past. Why are they getting off easier now than before? I fear noone trusts the DOJ to take the proper measures. Please go to the specialized press, www.nwcomputing.com, www.infoworld.com, arstechnica.com, anadtech.com and see the user surveys which are clearly against not slowing down Microsoft and give more choices out there.

The damage is done but only you can prevent worst in the future.

No one wants to see Microsoft go down. We are the people and we want choices. That's what we work for. We are the people and we are the voice that elect our leaders to take actions and protect us.

I feel Microsoft should be restrained and forced to give us a choice. The choices could be Windows without Internet Explorer, Windows Media player, Outlook Express, OEM who can decide according to the market what to bundle in. Maybe even a bare bone more secure operating system which people would pay more.

You will find a surge in buying computers as the prices fall and people are anxious to pick up where America left off on September 11th if there is a choice, if people feel you are protecting their rights to choices and if they do not feel locked down by big companies.

Thank you,

Nick Zart

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